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# The Interface Between Beliefs and Behavior

## HENRY KISSINGER'S OPERATIONAL CODE AND THE VIETNAM WAR

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This paper examines the interface between Henry Kissinger's operational code and his bargaining behavior during the Vietnam conflict. Kissinger's position at the pinnacle of the American foreign affairs hierarchy, amidst the existence of competing policy recommendations, may be regarded as necessary conditions to test the impact of his operational code upon American foreign policy. A comparison of his academic writings and his conduct of the Vietnam negotiations reveals a congruent relationship between his operational code and his bargaining behavior. Taken collectively, the code's components approximate game theory's "prisoner's dilemma" description of politics and specify a "general preference relation" that prescribes a consistent, predictable, metagame repertoire of responses.

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The important dimensions of foreign policy are a source of controversy in the international relations literature today. The two most prominent conceptualizations are the *event* and the *decision*, which are identified with the comparative foreign policy and decision-making sections of the literature, respectively. Both of these conceptualiza-

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tions have acquired an a-rational connotation, in that they do not rely upon an ends/means model to explain foreign policy. Events are "bounded actions" whose antecedents are either attributes of the national actor or stimuli in the form of actions received from another national actor (Hermann, 1971; McGowan and Shapiro, 1973). Decisions are "outputs" of the national bureaucracy's standard operating procedures or "outcomes" of bargaining processes among bureaucrats in the nation's foreign affairs agencies (Allison, 1971; Allison and Halperin, 1972). The conceptualization of foreign policy as a "choice" or a series of choices which are intelligible as goal-oriented behavior has receded in popularity. The reasons for the decline of cognitive approaches to foreign policy have been summarized elsewhere by Holsti (1975: 12), who concludes that, nevertheless, "There is a growing body of empirical research which indicates . . . (a cognitive approach) . . . may prove rewarding when one or more of the following conditions exist." The conditions cited by Holsti include innovative decision-making situations, long-range policy planning situations, decisions under highly complex, ambiguous, or unanticipated circumstances, decisions under stress, and decisions made by individuals at the top of the bureaucratic pyramid (Holsti, 1975: 13-14). Under these circumstances Holsti hypothesizes that an individual's "cognitive map" may heavily influence his diagnosis of the situation, his search and analysis of different action alternatives, and his subsequent prescriptions and choices that lead to a foreign policy decision (Holsti, 1975: 19, 38-39).

The cognitive map notion has accumulated several meanings among scholars, ranging from the entire complex of dispositions that constitute an individual's personality (Smith, 1968) to the specific rationale that an individual constructs for a particular set of actions (Axelrod, 1971; Shapiro and Bonham, 1973). The operational code construct, developed by Leites (1951) and refined by George (1969), is an attempt to isolate the most politically relevant aspects of an individual's cognitive map and conceptualize them so that they become a set of general beliefs about political life. Leites used the concept of "operational code" initially to refer to those instrumental aspects of Bolshevik beliefs that related to the strategy and tactics of political action and thereby influenced Soviet decision-making. He later explored the philosophical components of the Bolshevik code and attempted to relate both features to the personalities and historical experiences that shaped the Bolshevik approach to polities (Leites, 1953). George reformulated the major themes from the Leites analysis of Bolshevism into a series of questions

to guide subsequent inventories of the operational codes of other decision makers.

According to George (1969: 201-216), a decision maker's operational code consists of his answers to the following questions.

### *Philosophical*

- (1) What is the "essential" nature of political life? Is the political universe essentially one of harmony or conflict? What is the fundamental character of one's political opponents?
- (2) What are the prospects for the eventual realization of one's fundamental political values and aspirations? Can one be optimistic or must one be pessimistic on this score, and in what respects the one and/or the other?
- (3) Is the political future predictable? In what sense and to what extent?
- (4) How much "control" or "mastery" can one have over historical development? What is one's role in "moving" and "shaping" history in the desired direction?
- (5) What is the role of "chance" in human affairs and in historical development?

### *Instrumental*

- (1) What is the best approach for selecting goals or objectives for political action?
- (2) How are the goals of action pursued most effectively?
- (3) How are the risks of political action calculated, controlled, and accepted?
- (4) What is the best "timing" of action to advance one's interests?
- (5) What is the utility and role of different means for advancing one's interests?

Contemporary advocates of the operational code approach to the study of decision-making stop short of establishing a link between a government's behavior and either a decision maker's dispositions or his decisions. Holsti (1975: 18-19) argues that "it is not very fruitful to assume direct linkages between beliefs and foreign policy action . . . [and] . . . it is important to recognize the distinction between decisions and foreign policy actions. The bureaucratic politics literature has illustrated the many potential sources of slippage between executive decisions and the implementation of policy in the form of foreign policy actions." The other principal advocate of the operational code approach has also cautioned against the implication that the operational code is "a set of rules and recipes to be applied mechanically to the choice of action" (George, 1969: 196-197).

In spite of the reservations expressed against the use of a cognitive approach by its critics and the limitations placed on the application of

the operational code construct by its principal advocates, the objective of this study is to attempt to establish connections between Kissinger's operational code and American foreign policy behavior. The scope of these linkages is logically restricted to decision-making situations with characteristics that permit Kissinger to exercise his personal influence. However, the style of the Secretary of State has been to conduct personally or to dominate all phases of several American foreign policy endeavors, including the action or implementation phase. In such cases it may be possible to determine the influence, if any, of his operational code even on that aspect of the foreign policy process.

The decision to focus on Kissinger's conduct of the Vietnam negotiations as a case study is based on several considerations. This case meets the conditions which are identified by Holsti with the fruitful application of a cognitive approach. The termination of American involvement in the Vietnam war was the biggest immediate challenge on the national agenda of the first Nixon Administration. As a nonroutine situation that required more than the application of standard operating procedures or decision rules, the Vietnam conflict produced decisions made at the top of the government hierarchy by leaders who were relatively free from bureaucratic and other constraints. The implementation of America's Vietnam policy involved long and exhausting negotiations under stress that may have impaired the ability of decision makers to perform complex cognitive tasks.

Under these conditions the cognitive maps of American decision makers were very likely to play a large role in determining the complex of behaviors and motivations that constituted U.S. policy toward the Vietnam conflict between 1969 and 1973. Kissinger occupied a central position in the formulation and implementation of the Vietnam policy during this period, although President Nixon's influence was also important. The President's ratification of the National Security Advisor's recommendations was a necessary step in the policy process, but the President's active influence was intermittent, limited to those occasions where he personally intervened in the implementation phase of a policy or provided his own rationale for American actions. The nature and timing of the President's participation has proved to be relatively easy to identify, so that it is possible to assess Kissinger's personal impact on the pattern of American behavior during the Vietnam conflict. The existence of several extensive chronicles of the Vietnam negotiations has made it possible to identify with some assurance the respective roles of the President and his Advisor (Kalb and

Kalb, 1974; Szulc, 1974; Landau, 1972). Access to these sources has influenced the decision to select the Vietnam case, as has the conflict orientation of the questions in the operational code construct, which makes a case study of adversary relations appropriate.

## COGNITIVE MAPS AND INTERNATIONAL REALITIES

Any connection between Henry Kissinger's operational code and his conduct of American foreign policy is likely to be multifaceted, because both the operational code construct and the concept of foreign policy are multidimensional. The principal components of the operational code's structure have already been circumscribed by George's ten questions. The major dimensions of foreign policy are the definition of the problem which a policy maker selects, the types and sequences of behaviors which characterize the action component of his response, and the identity and scope of the objectives which his behavior is intended to satisfy.<sup>1</sup> This conceptualization of foreign policy permits the analysis of a policy's structure, i.e., the strategic and tactical mosaic that emerges as the behaviors and motivations that characterize a decision maker's response to a problem are charted over time. If there is a connection between the operational code and foreign policy constructs, it should show up as a congruent relationship between the various components of a decision maker's operational code and the components of his foreign policy. Perhaps a comparison of Kissinger's bargaining behavior during the Vietnam conflict with the principles in his operational code for bargaining in limited war situations will reveal that this behavior pattern conforms to the prescriptions of the code.

The data sources for Kissinger's operational code are his scholarly treatises of European diplomatic history and his more polemical analyses of contemporary international problems, both of which have received extended scrutiny of various kinds by other scholars (Graubard, 1973; Liska, 1975; Burd, 1975; Eldridge, 1975). None of these studies organize their analyses in terms of the operational code framework. Moreover, they either do not systematically relate their descriptions of Kissinger's beliefs to his foreign policy behavior or they depend partly on Kissinger's behavior and rhetoric as a government official for their analysis of Kissinger's beliefs. This study relies on a qualitative

1. These four components combine aspects of the event and decision-making definitions of foreign policy. (See Azar et al., 1972; Kegley, 1973; Hermann, 1972; Allison, 1971; Allison and Halperin, 1972.)

content analysis of Kissinger's academic writings for the identification of his operational code. The data sources for his behavior as the chief U.S. negotiator during the Vietnam conflict include the texts of speeches and interviews published in the *Bulletin* of the U.S. Department of State and the "inside" information available in published chronicles of the Vietnam negotiations (Kalb and Kalb, 1974; Szulc, 1974; Landau, 1972).

Because the central hypothesis in this research design relates a variable and a qualitatively-measured constant, its confirmation could violate the falsifiability criterion associated with the logical positivist formulation of the philosophy of science. If the code is invoked as a constant to explain all the variations in Kissinger's behavior, then it really explains none of his behavior because by definition the hypothesis is not capable of being disconfirmed (falsified). Falsification requires at least the possibility and preferably the opportunity to observe some variations in the initial conditions as well as in the phenomenon that they explain (Nagel, 1961: 12; Popper, 1959: 84-87). Three other aspects of the research design, however, render somewhat manageable and perhaps neutralize the problem of falsifiability associated with non-quantitative data. First, those instrumental elements of Kissinger's code that are most likely to be related to his bargaining behavior in a limited war situation are carefully explicated. Second, the behavioral data are both variable and semiquantitative (ordinal) events data, which are scaled with appropriate reliability and validity tests. Third, the behavioral data are longitudinal and can therefore be analyzed as a variated series of stimulus-response chains with the operational code as an intervening constant. Although the code remains constant in the analysis, it does prescribe different responses to different stimuli that do vary over time in the events data. These features of the research design provide the opportunity to make observations that could falsify the hypothesized relationships between Kissinger's operational code and his bargaining behavior during his tenure as the chief U.S. negotiator with North Vietnam.

The qualitative nature of the content analysis of Kissinger's operational code makes it relatively easy to distort Kissinger's position with respect to the various beliefs in his operational code by an unsystematic perusal of his writings. To guard against this possibility, two safeguards have been employed. First, the major sources for the construction of the code are Kissinger's books rather than his journal articles, because they presumably represent his most carefully considered views and because,

with one major exception, his articles are revised and incorporated into his books. Second, the operational code analysis has been compared with the analysis of these sources by two other authors who did not use the operational code as their analytical framework. Graubard's (1973) intellectual biography of Kissinger is a nonquantitative analysis of Kissinger's academic writings, while Eldridge's (1975) study is a quantitative content analysis of a sample of Kissinger's academic writings and public statements as a policy maker.

This comparison has not revealed any major discrepancies between the beliefs discovered by these authors and the content of the operational code analysis. The same procedure has been followed in the collection of events data. The most comprehensive account of the Vietnam negotiations (Kalb and Kalb, 1974), which was reportedly written with Kissinger's assistance, is the source for the chronology in Appendix A and the events data in Figure 1. This source has been checked against two other authoritative sources (Szulc, 1974; Landau, 1972), and major deviations from the Kalb and Kalb study are noted in the body of this article.

#### **HENRY KISSINGER'S OPERATIONAL CODE**

As a Harvard undergraduate, Henry Kissinger wrote an unusually long honors thesis entitled *The Meaning of History* (n.d.). Using the philosophies of Spengler, Toynbee, and Kant as vehicles, Kissinger formulated a philosophy of history that includes answers to the following questions associated with the operational code construct. How much "control" or "mastery" can one have over historical development? What is one's role in "moving" and "shaping" history in the desired direction? What is the role of "chance" in human affairs and in historical development (Kissinger, n.d.)?

Kissinger's philosophy of history rests on the following metaphysical propositions: (a) the external world of events and the internal experiences of the individual are not perfectly congruent; (b) one basic incongruity is the inability of the individual to isolate by the use of reason and observation either an externally determinate pattern of historical change or a set of postulates that he himself can use to determine historical change; (c) rather, the individual is repeatedly confronted with the gap between an inner experience of freedom to act and external evidence that the consequences of his actions do not always correspond to their intentions; (d) these consequences are necessary,

i.e., beyond the individual's control; (e) this gap is universal, i.e., a general description of the human condition, and pervasive, i.e., the gap between act and event occurs so frequently that it poses important metaphysical and moral questions. Is the interior experience of freedom merely an illusion? Is the unfolding of historical events inexorable? If the individual's freedom to act is illusory, then is the experience of ethical responsibility for one's actions also chimerical (Kissinger, n.d.)?

Kissinger answers these questions by appealing to mysticism instead of rationalism or empiricism. Taking his solution from clues that he finds in Kant's philosophy, Kissinger categorizes the individual's inner experience of freedom as one which transcends rational knowledge and empirical experience (Kissinger, n.d.: 260-322). This experience involves an intensive realization of the antinomy expressed in the propositions above, plus a recognition of the limits of individual responsibility for events, which follows from this realization. For Kissinger, the individual's control over historical development is somewhat modest, and the roles of chance and the past are important. Nevertheless, the individual does have a role in moving and shaping history in the right direction. It consists in attempting to implement one's own intuitive vision of the universe within the external limits set by man's lack of control over historical development and by the tolerance that accompanies a vision which affirms the dignity of each individual (Kissinger, n.d.).

### KISSINGER'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

The personal philosophy of history in Kissinger's honors thesis is relatively neutral with respect to the problem of effective political action. The ideological content of the philosophy has a humanist trust that is consistent with a humane conservatism, a humane liberalism, or even a humane radicalism. It is potentially compatible with either a passivist or an activist political philosophy, depending on whether the tolerance and necessity components or the visionary, existentialist elements become the dominant forces that influence the individual's political conduct. In his doctoral dissertation, *A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh, and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22*, Kissinger develops these themes from his philosophy of history when he analyzes the modes of political leadership exemplified by Napoleon, Tsar Alexander, Castlereagh, and Metternich. Napoleon typifies the conqueror, Alexander represents the prophet, Castlereagh and Metternich personify the statesman. Each one symbolizes a response to the problem of order, a fundamental concern of political philosophy.

The conqueror and the prophet roles played by Napoleon and Alexander, respectively, emphasize the visionary, existential themes in Kissinger's philosophy of history. The statesman's role enacted by Castlereagh and Metternich, however, encompasses the elements of tolerance and necessity as well.

While the conqueror attempts to equate his will with the structure of obligations and the prophet seeks to dissolve organization in a moment of transcendence, the statesman strives to keep latent the tension between organization and inspiration; to create a pattern of obligations sufficiently spontaneous to reduce to a minimum the necessity for the application of force, but, at the same time, of sufficient firmness not to require the legitimization of a moment of exhaltation. [Kissinger, 1957b: 317]

Kissinger's personal preference for the statesman's solution to the problems of order and effective political action implies the answers to the questions in the operational code construct dealing with the essential nature of political life, the predictability of the political future, and the prospects for realizing one's own political goals. For Kissinger, the essential nature of political life depends on the fundamental character of the participants, which is expressed by the prevailing mode of political leadership. When the statesman's approach dominates, as it did in Europe from the end of the religious wars to the French Revolution and again after the Congress of Vienna to the beginning of World War I, then political life is relatively harmonious. When the revolutionary modes are prominent, as they were during the religious wars, the French Revolution, and now in many parts of the world, then the essential nature of political life is one of intense conflict (Kissinger, 1969a: 48).

The predictability of the political future and the prospects for realizing one's political goals are related to the nature of political life. Predictability decreases in an era of revolutionary leadership, which leads to a relatively pessimistic assessment of the prospects for political success. On the other hand, predictability increases when the statesman's approach dominates, for the prospects for political success are greater, though not necessarily imminent. The increase in predictability is a function of the relatively incremental rate of change associated with the statesman's approach to world politics.

#### **THE SELECTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLITICAL GOALS**

The philosophical conviction that the statesman's role is the best approach to world politics carries with it certain limitations. There

is an obligation to work with the historical materials at hand; it is necessary to formulate a conception of national purpose that is compatible, empirically and morally, with the particular configuration of constraints inherent in the historical situation. Although their configuration may vary from situation to situation, some constraints recur frequently in Kissinger's analyses. They include the uneasy coexistence of several nations in the international arena, each with potentially different conceptions of justice, and the organizational constraints imposed by the problem of "bureaucratic rationality."

the statesman is inevitably confronted by the inertia of his material, by the fact that other powers are not factors to be manipulated but forces to be reconciled; that the requirements of security differ with the geographical location and the domestic structure of the powers. . . . The acid test of a policy . . . is its ability to obtain domestic support. This has two aspects: the problem of legitimizing a policy *within* the governmental apparatus, which is a problem of bureaucratic rationality; and that of harmonizing it with the national experience, which is a problem of historical development. [Kissinger, 1957b: 326]

In explicitly recognizing these features of the historical situation as legitimate constraints on political action, the statesman's political style must be one that attempts to minimize domestic and international discontinuity in the direction and pace of historical change. This approach to world politics does not necessarily eliminate a visionary set of ultimate objectives, but it does circumscribe the range of acceptable strategies for attaining them. The use of force and charisma to impose one nation's conception of justice on the international order is ruled out. Instead, negotiations must be the principal means of establishing a common notion of legitimacy.<sup>2</sup> The use of force should be limited mainly to the defense of the established, legitimate principles of international order, which are not negotiable—even to maintain the peace (Kissinger, 1957b: 1).

The dominant characteristic of a revolutionary international order is the absence of a generally accepted notion of legitimacy. The statesman's test in such a situation is to shape one from the available historical material. This is "essentially a moral act . . . based on knowledge but not identical with it . . . an *estimate* which depend[s] for its validity on a conception of goals as much as on an understanding of the available

2. "Legitimacy as here used should not be confused with justice. It means no more than an international agreement about the nature of workable arrangements and about the permissible aims and methods of foreign policy" (Kissinger, 1957b: 1).

material" (Kissinger, 1957b: 325). Kissinger respects Castlereigh and Metternich as statesmen because they used force to defend the legitimate international order against Napoleon's attempts to internationalize the French Revolution by force. He also admires them for their understanding of the skills of diplomacy in the construction of the Concert of Europe. However, he finds fault with their inability to reconcile successfully the domestic and international constraints of their era, although Castlereigh and Metternich were able to escape domestic constraints in the short run by monopolizing both the planning and the execution of foreign policy (Kissinger, 1957b: 325-329).

The political style of a statesman must include three traits, if he is to be successful. Internationally, he must have the diplomatic skills necessary to negotiate with other nations the implementation of his conception of the international order. Domestically, he must have the organizational ability to isolate from the bureaucracy those aspects of foreign policy where conjecture, creativity, and the constant reformulation of goals require the centralization of policy planning and execution. The bureaucracy's role should be limited to situations where the goals are given and relatively constant, so that implementation is routine and limited primarily by technical feasibility. In addition, the statesman must be an educator who is able to "bridge the gap between a people's experience and his vision" (Kissinger, 1957b: 326-329).

#### **CALCULATING AND CONTROLLING THE RISKS OF POLITICAL ACTION**

Negotiations occupy a pivotal position in Kissinger's operational code. Metaphysically, man's lack of control over history makes the effectiveness of other means, such as charisma or force, transitory and risky; the slower, deliberate process of negotiations is the best means to maximize the chances for realizing one's goals. Morally, the negotiation process is the most appropriate way to insure that foreign policy is based on a sense of self-limitation, respect for human dignity, and tolerance for the aspirations of others. Strategically, negotiations are necessary to establish the conditions for international order. Because Kissinger's own philosophy contains the principles of self-limitation and tolerance for other philosophical positions, his transcendent negotiating objective is to communicate this aspect of his own foreign policy to other nations and persuade them to base their policies on a similar sense of limits (Kissinger, 1957a: 317; Burd, 1975).

If negotiations cannot establish a mutual sense of limits regarding the conduct of foreign policy, then they can at least establish a mutual interpretation of power relationships, which can also limit the aims and methods of foreign policy in the short run. If there exists a mutually recognized equilibrium of forces between nations, then the identification of policy outcomes compatible with contending notions of legitimacy is at least possible. Kissinger believes that negotiated settlements in international relations have always depended on the mutual realization of harmony's advantage plus the mutual fear of the consequences of no agreement (Kissinger, 1957a: 4, 141-142, 203). The smaller the mutual interest in harmony, the greater the role of power relationships in determining the outcome of negotiations; the greater the mutual interest in harmony, the smaller the role of power relationships (1957a: 203-204). Where a common notion of legitimacy is absent, the existence of a mutually recognized power equilibrium is necessary if negotiations are to identify mutually acceptable policy outcomes. Otherwise the stronger nation is likely to resort to the use of force, if its decision makers lack the virtue of a sense of limits and self-restraint.

Where force must actually be used, negotiations are the most effective means to control the risks involved, especially in the nuclear age. In military situations the combined use of negotiations and force must still be directed toward the identification of mutually acceptable policy outcomes. The possible outcomes of a military situation are basically four: local military victory by one side or the other, military stalemate, a negotiated settlement, or nuclear holocaust if the conflicting parties possess nuclear weapons. Kissinger's strategy is to avoid both victory by either side and a nuclear holocaust; a military stalemate or a negotiated settlement are the more preferable outcomes (Kissinger, 1957a: 168).

A military victory by either side is morally and strategically questionable, since a decision imposed solely by force is likely to infringe on the rights of others and also involve high risks, including the risk of nuclear war in some cases. Consequently, both a militant, absolute-gain strategy of military victory or a pacifist, absolute-loss strategy of military withdrawal in a military situation should be avoided. The absolute-gain strategy abandons the moral doctrine of self-limitation and risks unacceptable retaliation by the opponent. The absolute-loss strategy permits the opponent to abandon the self-limitation doctrine, thereby endangering the possibilities for a legitimate international order based on mutual tolerance (Kissinger, 1957a: 7).<sup>3</sup>

3. The strategy labels are mine and not Kissinger's. (See also Mushakoji, 1972.)

The best strategy is the relative-gain strategy, which attempts to settle the conflict on terms that are marginally better for both sides than the characteristics of a military stalemate. To achieve this outcome, it is necessary to have the military capabilities to establish and maintain a military stalemate plus the negotiating skills to formulate an offer that makes the indefinite continuation of a military stalemate a relative-loss strategy for the opponent. A military stalemate is a situation wherein the opponent cannot achieve military victory, although he may still be able to continue fighting (Kissinger, 1957a: 168-169).

Ideally, a conflict should not escalate to the point where armed combat occurs. Negotiations should communicate to the opponent mutually beneficial terms that would preclude the escalation of the conflict to crisis proportions. The continuation of negotiations throughout the conflict should limit the rate of escalation, the scope of the conflict, and the duration of the sustained use of force, if armed combat becomes necessary. The existence of a power equilibrium should also help to contain the conflict by reducing the incentive to resort to force. This military doctrine corresponds to the flexible response/graduated deterrence strategy (Schelling, 1960, 1966; Kaufman, 1964; Halperin, 1963) with one important revision. Kissinger emphasizes the role of explicit negotiations as well as the tacit bargaining commonly associated with the doctrine's deployment of military force and the conduct of limited wars of attrition; whereas the orthodox interpretation primarily emphasizes the explicit or tacit threat of force to deny the opponent something or to compel him to do something, Kissinger relies heavily on the use of explicit proposed terms of agreement to end the conflict.

Kissinger's emphasis on the role of negotiations prior to and during a military conflict, plus the eschewing of military victory as a political objective, are the two principal ways in which he controls the risks of political action that involves the use of force. At some point in a military conflict Kissinger's objective is to maneuver the opponent into a situation where he must choose among three outcomes to the conflict: military defeat or withdrawal and an absolute loss; military stalemate or escalation and a relative loss; negotiated settlement and a relative gain. Diplomatic overtures are essential to make clear that national survival is not at stake and that a settlement is possible on reasonable terms, or else the opponent is very likely to choose military stalemate or escalation.<sup>4</sup>

4. Relative is used here in the sense that he may lose less than if he withdraws, and he may gain less than if he achieves military victory. Kissinger recognizes that during the

To achieve the best timing in the combined use of negotiations and force against opponents, the following sequence should be approximated: negotiate throughout the conflict; use threats only to counter threats or the use of force initiated by the opponent; if necessary, use force to counter the use of force initiated by the opponent; use enough force combined with generous peace terms so that the opponent is faced with an attractive peace settlement versus the unattractive alternatives of military defeat or the necessity to escalate. This sequence of steps, the rule of proportionality in the application of force, and the maintenance of negotiations with the opponent throughout the conflict make the risks of war in the nuclear age acceptable to Kissinger (1957a: 168-172, 183-190).

Negotiations and force, therefore, are the most important means for advancing one's goals in the international arena. Their relative utility depends on the identity of the participants and the intensity of the conflict over international goals. The best approach in dealing with allies is to base an agreement on a common conception of the future. Negotiations are necessary to communicate and establish such a conception (Kissinger, 1966: 248-249). Relations with opponents may require the use of military force as well as negotiation, a prospect that involves political risks. In order for negotiations with opponents to be effective, either a mutual agreement on the permissible aims and methods of foreign policy or a common interpretation of power relationships must exist. Neither condition is likely to be established without negotiations.

#### KISSINGER'S OPERATIONAL CODE AND THE VIETNAM WAR

The strategic and tactical mosaic formed by the types and series of American behaviors during the Vietnam conflict between 1969 and 1973 is essentially congruent with the premises of Kissinger's operational code and with his conception of a mutually satisfactory outcome for the war. In an article originally published in *Foreign Affairs* (Kissinger, 1969b), which was written before he became a member of the Nixon Administration, Kissinger advocated a two-track approach to the

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course of a military conflict, he may have to pursue a relative loss strategy of escalation in order to pose the threat of stalemate or local military defeat. Negotiations in this context may not lead immediately to settlement, since it may take several escalations to convert the opponent to a relative gain strategy from his own absolute gain or relative loss strategy (Kissinger, 1957a: 169-170).

termination of the war. He argued that American objectives should "be to (a) bring about a staged withdrawal of external forces, North Vietnamese and American, (b) thereby to create a maximum incentive for the contending forces in South Vietnam to work out a political agreement. The structure and content of such an agreement must be left to the South Vietnamese" (Kissinger, 1974: 130). Each of these objectives would be negotiated on a separate track. "The United States should concentrate on the subject of the mutual withdrawal of external forces and avoid negotiating about the internal structure of South Vietnam for as long as possible. The primary responsibility for negotiating the internal structure of South Vietnam should be left for direct negotiations among the South Vietnamese" (Kissinger, 1974: 211-234).

The settlement of the Vietnam war which the United States signed in Paris on January 27, 1973 essentially achieved these objectives. After four years of negotiations the United States and North Vietnam settled on the terms of American troop withdrawal and agreed that a "National Council of Reconciliation and Concord," composed of the major South Vietnamese political forces, should decide unanimously the future internal structure of South Vietnam (Bulletin, 1973: 169-188). The modification of "mutual withdrawal" by both U.S. and North Vietnamese troops in South Vietnam as an American condition for settlement occurred during the course of the negotiations and in the context of the promulgation of the Nixon Doctrine. The Indochina version of the Nixon Doctrine involved "Vietnamization" of the military operations in South Vietnam.<sup>5</sup> The failure of Saigon and Hanoi to implement the Paris agreements does not negate the fact that Kissinger was able to achieve a settlement that corresponded to his initial conception of a mutually satisfactory outcome to the conflict.

The bargaining strategy which Kissinger employed to achieve this outcome followed a two-track approach to the negotiations in Paris. The initial American proposals called for mutual troop withdrawals and a cease fire. They were vague on the subject of the future of the present Saigon regime, except to say that the United States would not impose any government on South Vietnam nor would Washington be a party to such a move (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 134-135). This policy conflicted with the North Vietnamese position, which called for a one-track approach, linking a cease-fire and troop withdrawals to the ouster of the Thieu regime and its replacement with a coalition government that included

5. Kissinger and Secretary of State Rogers were apparently skeptical about Vietnamization as an alternative to a negotiated settlement. Kissinger "saw it as a bargaining ploy, a negotiating tool" (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 128; see also Nixon, 1970: 68-71).

the National Liberation Front. In a series of secret meetings with North Vietnamese negotiators Kissinger would spend the next three and one half years trying to convert the North Vietnamese to a two-track approach.

In the summer of 1970, Kissinger and Nixon decided to propose a "cease-fire-in-place" in an attempt to break the deadlock. Kissinger recommended this departure from the "mutual withdrawal" position in the negotiations as the type of cease fire proposal most acceptable to North Vietnam. The President authorized the proposal after the Cambodian invasion ended on June 30. Nixon apparently developed considerable respect for ARVN's combat capabilities as a result of that operation and decided that a cease-fire-in-place would no longer greatly jeopardize the Saigon regime. Kissinger first secretly proposed a cease-fire-in-place to Xuan Thuy, the North Vietnamese negotiator at the Paris peace talks, in September 1970. Thuy simply restated Hanoi's previous one-track position. When Ambassador Bruce, the U.S. representative at the Paris talks, officially placed this proposal on the table for discussion in October 1970, the North Vietnamese response was the same (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 173-175).

Kissinger resolved after this experience to make major diplomatic initiatives only to someone in the Hanoi hierarchy who had the authority to reciprocate. Such a person was Le Duc Tho, a member of North Vietnam's Politburo, who arrived in Paris after the invasion of Laos by ARVN troops in the spring of 1971. In a series of six meetings between May 31 and September 13, Kissinger restated the American cease-fire-in-place proposal, and Tho responded with a nine-point peace plan that Kissinger accepted as the basis for future negotiations. By July 26, the two negotiators had narrowed their differences to just two of the nine points in the North Vietnamese plan. On August 16, Kissinger presented a U.S. eight-point plan that closely paralleled Hanoi's and attempted to bridge the gap on the two points that remained in contention. However, after four weeks of careful consideration Hanoi decided to reject the American proposal (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 182-183).

Subsequent attempts by the United States to renew negotiations in the autumn of 1971 failed to resolve the deadlock, which continued until the late spring of 1972. After the resumption of American bombing above the Demilitarized Zone, which was prompted by a massive North Vietnamese invasion across the DMZ on March 31, 1972, Kissinger and Le Duc Tho met in Paris once again on May 2. At that meeting Kissinger proposed a withdrawal of U.S. forces from Indochina within four months, if North Vietnam would agree to a cease-fire and the return of

prisoners of war (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 299). When Tho rejected this offer and reiterated his demands that Thieu's ouster and a coalition government be linked to American withdrawal, President Nixon decided on May 8 to mine Haiphong and other North Vietnamese ports. He accompanied this action with B-52 air strikes on railroads linking North Vietnam with China (Nixon, 1972).

The decision to escalate was probably contrary to Kissinger's advice. He had apparently advocated stepping up B-52 air strikes, which would not risk the interdiction of Soviet supplies that reached Hanoi by sea. Heavier bombing would increase the military pressure on Hanoi and still avoid a confrontation with Russia that could endanger the upcoming Moscow summit on May 22. Nevertheless, he supported Nixon's choice and, when it became clear that the Soviets would not cancel the summit meeting, pushed for a reduction in Soviet supplies to Hanoi during the ensuing Soviet-American talks in Moscow (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 302-309, 313-314, 330-331). The President's mining gamble paid off in three ways: it did not wreck the summit; the North Vietnamese invasion forces paused in their offensive in the South; the Soviet Union apparently put pressure on Hanoi to negotiate seriously once again. Kissinger concluded the American military and diplomatic offensive with a visit to Peking, where he was apparently successful in gaining Chinese support for a negotiated end to the Vietnam War (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 336-338).

At the end of June, following Sino-Soviet pressure on Hanoi to negotiate seriously with the United States, all major North Vietnamese diplomats returned home for consultations. On July 19, Washington and Hanoi jointly announced that Kissinger and Tho would resume meetings in Paris. Tho now spoke of the reality of "two administrations, two armies, and three political forces" in South Vietnam and by September had accepted the need for a regime in South Vietnam that was not imposed by one side on the other. These meetings between Kissinger and Tho in August-September 1972 culminated on September 26 when the Hanoi diplomat proposed a "National Council of Reconciliation and Concord" that would lack governmental powers, operate on the unanimity principle, and be composed of the Saigon, NLF, and neutralist segments of South Vietnam's political groups. He also proposed a cease-fire-in-place limited to South Vietnam and did not demand the ouster of the Thieu regime. The North Vietnamese had finally abandoned a one-track approach to the negotiations (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 339-340, 345-346, 349).

On October 8, 1972 Kissinger met with Tho and considered a nine-point Hanoi proposal that incorporated the two-track approach to the issues of a cease-fire, troop withdrawal, and the Saigon regime's status. Tho presented it as a draft agreement in English which, after consultation with President Nixon, Kissinger accepted subject to the working out of some minor revisions. The two diplomats then worked out a tentative timetable for completing the revisions, clearing the document with Saigon, initialing the draft document, and then formally signing the final document, which would be completed by October 26, 1972 (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 354-356).

This timetable proved to be tragically overambitious. Due to a combination of organizational foul-ups and missed signals in the American and North Vietnamese bureaucracies, Kissinger's fatigue and his misjudgment of the reactions of Presidents Nixon and Thieu to the deal that he had made, and a reversion by Hanoi to their previous one-track approach when Kissinger was unable to meet the timetable, the Vietnam agreements were not signed until January 1973 (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 356-385; Szulc, 1974: 21-69). In the interim, Thieu apparently persuaded Nixon that he needed additional terms in the draft agreement. He and Nixon shared some reservations about the absence of terms (a) requiring North Vietnamese troop withdrawals concomitant with the cease-fire and (b) recognizing the DMZ as more than a provisional boundary between North and South Vietnam (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 382-383, 390, 392, 396, 398; Szulc, 1974: 54-59).

Consequently, Nixon instructed Kissinger to cable Hanoi that it would be difficult to sign the agreement on schedule. The United States would, however, stop all military activities above the twentieth parallel on October 25. The deadline for completing the agreement had by this time been extended to October 31 (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 379-385). Hanoi responded by publicizing the draft agreement on October 26 and privately inviting the United States to resume negotiations immediately. On the same day Kissinger publicly proclaimed "peace is at hand" and stated that one more brief negotiating session with North Vietnam should complete the agreement. Privately, Nixon rejected Hanoi's proposal for an early resumption of negotiations. They did not begin again until November 20, after the United States had airlifted a year's worth of military supplies into South Vietnam during the first three weeks of November. The ensuing negotiations between Kissinger and Tho continued intermittently until December 13, when Kissinger returned to Washington and reported that the talks were deadlocked

over the Nixon-Thieu demand that the DMZ be recognized as a frontier between the two Vietnams and over the phrasing of the protocols that would implement the agreement. The two Vietnams also would not compromise on the identification of the legitimate political groups in South Vietnam (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 379-385, 411).

The President responded by issuing a secret diplomatic ultimatum to Hanoi, warning that "serious negotiations" would have to be resumed within 72 hours. He also warned Thieu that any further obstruction of an agreement on his part would result in a separate American-North Vietnamese agreement and a cutoff of American aid to Saigon by the President. Nixon intended to resume the B-52 bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong if Hanoi did not respond to this ultimatum, a decision that Kissinger supported. Kissinger reportedly supported the resumption of B-52 bombing, but he apparently favored limiting it to military targets as much as possible and warning Hanoi before the bombing began (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 412-415). Beginning December 17, B-52s bombed North Vietnam for 12 days; then the President called a halt and proposed the resumption of negotiations. Le Duc Tho returned to Paris on January 6, 1973, and he and Kissinger began their last round of talks on January 8. By January 23, the two diplomats had completed the final agreement, which both governments officially signed on January 27.<sup>6</sup>

In spite of the exigencies of bureaucratic politics and alliance diplomacy, plus the personal intervention of President Nixon at key points, Kissinger dominated the conduct of the American foreign policy that terminated U.S. involvement in the Vietnam war. He acted according to the instrumental principles of his operational code (Kissinger, 1957a: 168-172, 183-190), which call for

- (1) negotiations throughout a conflict;
- (2) the use of threats and force only to counter their use by an opponent;
- (3) enough force applied in combination with generous peace terms so that the opponent is faced with an attractive peace settlement versus the unattractive alternatives of stalemate or the necessity to escalate.

The pattern of behavior prescribed by these tenets clearly matches the actual identity and sequence of American behaviors in the Vietnam

6. The bombing halt was in two steps, a partial halt until serious negotiations were resumed and then a halt above the twentieth parallel. The final agreements had some language changes that met the Nixon-Thieu objections to the October 8 draft agreement (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 418-422). See also Kissinger (1973: 162-163).

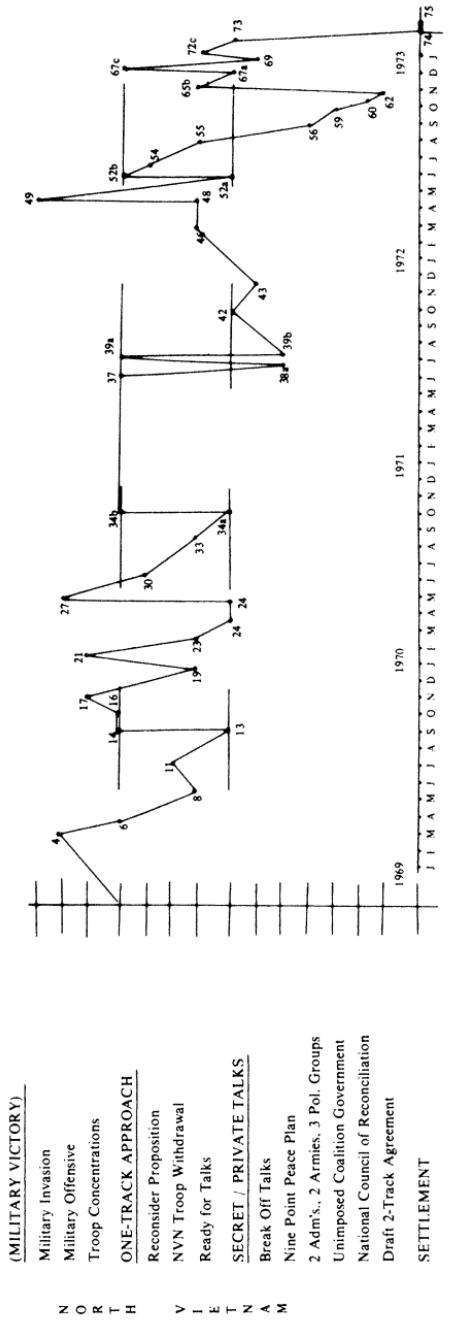


Figure 1: Identity and Sequence of Major Diplomatic and Military Initiatives by Hanoi & Washington, 1969-1973.

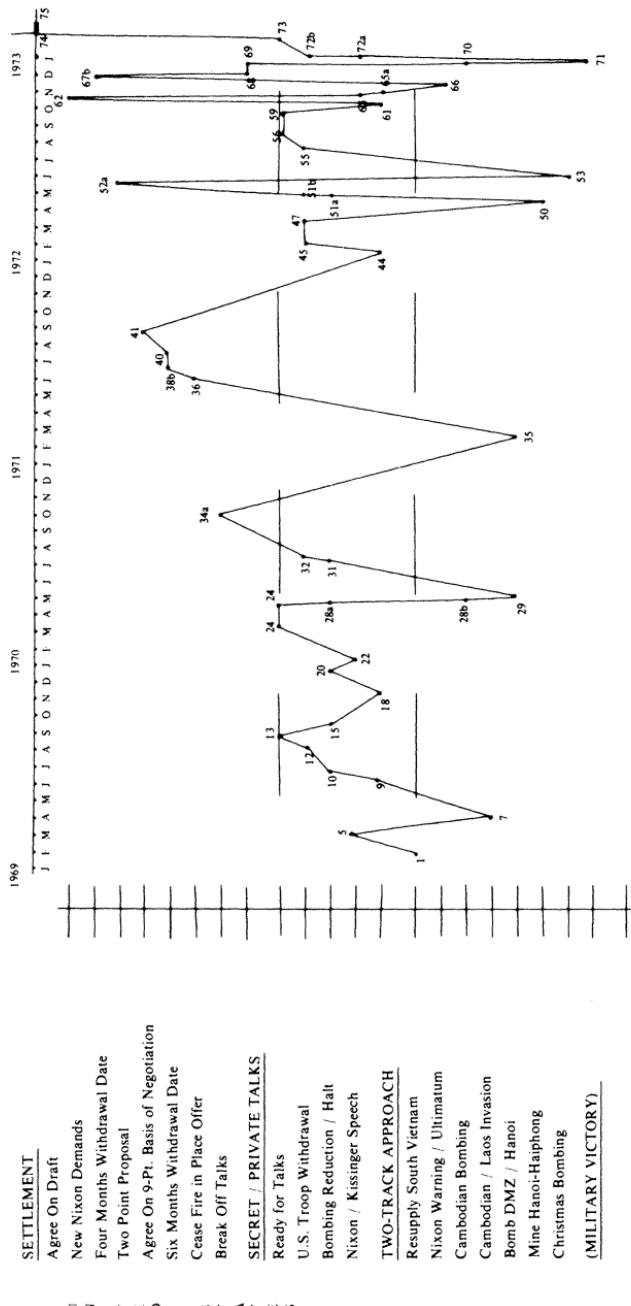


Figure 1 (Continued)

conflict between January 1969 and October 1972, as a graph of the major American diplomatic and military initiatives during this period reveals (see Figure 1).

On the graph are plotted the types and sequences of American and North Vietnamese behaviors toward one another between January 1969 and January 1973. On the horizontal axis of the graph is the month in which the behavior was initiated; the behaviors are ranged along a continuum (vertical axis) that positions each behavior in terms of whether it was a move toward a settlement or away from a settlement. The North Vietnamese behaviors are plotted in the upper half of the graph, while United States behaviors appear in the coordinates of the lower half. The behaviors of both nations are entered on the graph as consecutive numbers in the chronological order in which they occurred.<sup>7</sup> Analysis of the graph's plots shows the following patterns, which are congruent with the instrumental principles of Kissinger's operational code.

- With one exception (52b → 53) American escalation always follows a North Vietnamese military initiative until October 1972, as the following event combinations show: (4 → 7) (27 → 29), (49 → 50). This escalation pattern is consistent with principle 2 of Kissinger's code listed above.<sup>8</sup>
- A new American diplomatic initiative follows each American escalation until August 1972 (7 → 12) (29 → 34a) (35 → 36) (50 → 52a), when Hanoi makes a diplomatic initiative (56), presumably in response to American behavior (53) and Sino-Soviet pressure. This pattern of American diplomatic initiatives is consistent with principles 1 and 3 listed above.

7. See Appendix A for a numbered chronology of the behaviors, including some American and North Vietnamese behaviors directed toward other targets and which are not plotted on the graph. Some numbered items from the chronology are plotted on both the North Vietnamese and American halves of the graph because they involve either joint or parallel behaviors. The procedures for the codification of the chronology and the arrangement of the categories along the vertical axis to form a continuum are specified in Appendix A.

8. The word "initiative" is used here to refer essentially to those behaviors that represent either a more belligerent move than the actor's previous peak military behavior or a more conciliatory move than the actor's previous peak negotiating behavior. Operationally, in order for a behavior to be a military initiative, it must be scaled as far or farther along the continuum toward military victory as any previous behavior. A diplomatic initiative must likewise be scaled as far or farther along the continuum toward settlement as any previous behavior. It follows from this use of the word initiative that, for example, an American negotiating behavior can be both an "initiative" and a "response," i.e., both an innovative departure from the previous peak American negotiating behavior and a response to North Vietnamese behavior.

- When Hanoi makes a diplomatic initiative, the United States responds with a diplomatic initiative until October 1972 (8 → 12) (13 → 13) (24 → 24) (34a → 34a) (38a → 38b) (39b → 41) (60 → 62) with one exception (56 → 59). This pattern is consistent with Kissinger's emphasis on negotiations, as expressed in principles 1 and 3.
- The incremental pattern of American escalation over time and in response to similar behavior by the North Vietnamese until October 1972 follows the rule of proportionality in the application of force. Kissinger believes it will help limit the risks of escalation, provided the increase in the use of force is accompanied by diplomatic overtures.

There are two significant deviations from these generalizations. The first one occurred in the summer of 1972 after the mining of Haiphong in early May 1972 (53). No new American diplomatic initiative followed this escalation. Instead, each side announced the resumption of talks and, according to the Kalbs (1974: 339), the North Vietnamese suddenly began to talk about the reality of two administrations, two armies, and three political groupings in South Vietnam (56). Given the tenets of Kissinger's operational code and the previous pattern of U.S. diplomatic and military initiatives, there appears to be a "missing" American diplomatic initiative. This omission could be due to the influence of other variables in the decision-making process or there could be a significant gap in the Kalb and Kalb account of the Vietnam negotiations at this point.

According to the reconstruction of the Vietnam negotiations by Szulc (1974), Kissinger did make a new diplomatic initiative regarding Vietnam during the Moscow summit meetings at the end of May 1972. It "covered the North Vietnamese presence in the South, . . . [indicated a] willingness to suspend bombing even before the release of POW's and . . . [expressed] support for a tripartite electoral commission" (Szulc, 1974: 43). The second and third aspects of this initiative represented significant departures from the previous American negotiating position. Only two weeks ago, Nixon had declared that the return of American POWs was the first condition for the end of the bombing in North Vietnam. The United States had previously opposed a tripartite electoral commission, which would include Saigon, Vietcong, and neutralist elements, because of the fear that it would become a coalition government (Szulc, 1974: 42-43).

This evidence of a diplomatic initiative supports the behavioral pattern prescribed by Kissinger's operational code and implies that the code was the most influential variable on the sequence of American

behaviors during the spring and summer of 1972. During the subsequent visit by Podgorney to Hanoi, the North Vietnamese presumably learned from the Russian envoy that the American private negotiating position had changed significantly. This fact and Sino-Soviet pressure to negotiate seriously probably prompted the resumption of talks between Tho and Kissinger. Tho's references in these discussions to the reality of three political groups in South Vietnam and his proposal for a tripartite National Council of Reconciliation and Concord can then be interpreted as responses to Kissinger's proposal for a tripartite electoral commission and not as a sudden change in Hanoi's bargaining position brought about by other factors.

The second deviation from Kissinger's operational code in the pattern of American behavior occurred in October 1972, when other variables in the decision-making process inside both Washington and Hanoi delayed the acceptance of the draft agreement negotiated by Kissinger and Tho as the basis for a settlement of the conflict (60, 61, 62, ff.). The factors that reversed the trend away from a settlement and toward escalation were those articulated by the "bureaucratic politics" models of foreign policy decision-making (De Rivera, 1968; Allison, 1971; Allison and Halperin, 1972). The Kalb and Kalb account emphasizes the problems associated with the accurate relay of information through bureaucratic channels without the loss of important nuances (De Rivera, 1968: 46-52; Allison, 1971: 118-126). There was confusion in Hanoi, Saigon, and Washington over whether the National Council of Reconciliation and Concord was to be a governmental body or an administrative structure. Kissinger's English version of the draft differed from the Vietnamese translation of the document and the interpretation of the text by officials in Hanoi and Saigon (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 361-377). Szulc's account portrays Kissinger as a negotiator who had to bargain with both Hanoi and Saigon. Kissinger, his chief deputy Haig, and U.S. Ambassador Bunker all failed to obtain approval from Saigon for the American diplomatic initiative that was first proposed at the Moscow summit and then discussed tentatively with President Thieu as early as August 1972 (Szulc, 1974: 48-60).

The American decision to reconsider the terms of the draft agreement negotiated by Tho and Kissinger was a response to constraints that made it in some respects an "output" of organizational processes and an "outcome" of bargaining between Saigon and Washington. Although it was a "choice" made by President Nixon (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 375; Szulc, 1974: 57), the influence of nonrational variables in the decision-making process was high. Neither Kissinger nor Nixon

exercised the degree of personal control over the situation that had characterized earlier phases of the negotiations. When talks between Kissinger and Tho resumed, the momentum of the negotiations switched away from a settlement and toward stalemate and military escalation. President Nixon intervened decisively in the conduct of these negotiations and the Christmas bombing that led to the Paris agreements (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 386-422; Szulc, 1974: 59-62).

Although Henry Kissinger did not exercise absolute control over the conduct of the Vietnam negotiations on behalf of the United States, the overall structure of American behavior essentially matches his operational code, as do the terms of the settlement and the rationale which accompanied such a long and tortuous involvement in the Vietnam conflict.

It was always clear that a lasting peace could come about only if neither side sought to achieve everything that it wanted; indeed, that stability depended upon the relative dissatisfaction of all parties concerned. [Kissinger, 1973: 163]

This rationale for the settlement is consistent with the philosophical principles of Kissinger's operational code, which insist on incremental historical change in order to maximize the prospects for achieving one's political goals within the limits set by man's lack of control over historical development and a belief in the values of tolerance and the dignity of the individual.<sup>9</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The preceding comparison of Kissinger's operational code with his role in the Vietnam negotiations indicates that the pattern of American behaviors corresponded to the code's instrumental components, while the rationale was consistent with the philosophical principles of the code. Other decision makers in the American foreign affairs bureaucracy, including the President, sometimes opposed the preferences of

9. For President Nixon's "peace with honor" rationale, see Nixon (1973). Attributing a rationale to policy makers is a risky undertaking, since motivations are sometimes private and nearly always complex. The operational code construct taps conscious cognitive motives rather than subconscious psychoanalytical motives (George, 1969: 195-196). See Smith (1968) for a schematic presentation of the relationships between conscious and subconscious components of the human personality. Landau (1972) and Ward (1975) present psychoanalytical interpretations of Kissinger's personality and political behavior.

the Advisor for National Security Affairs (Kalb and Kalb, 1974: 386-388). Since all of these individuals occupied roles that probably disposed them to approach the definition of the decision-making situation in slightly different ways, some of this dissonance may be attributable to variations in their respective bureaucratic responsibilities.

However, it is possible that these differences may not correlate perfectly with bureaucratic position (Holsti, 1975: 10). Or it may be that individuals seek bureaucratic offices whose functions are compatible with their personal operational codes. In any event, the existence of controversy over the conduct of American policy tends to question the assertion that anybody placed in Kissinger's position would have behaved the way he did. The role of National Security Advisor is sufficiently ill-defined to permit considerable variation in the incumbent's policy preferences. This position at the apex of the American foreign affairs bureaucracy may permit the incumbent to synthesize the parochial concerns of actors located within the bureaucracy into a coherent vision and strategy. In this task the decision maker's operational code is likely to provide a cognitive map and a set of maxims for diagnosing and reacting to areas of structural uncertainty in the incoming information on which policy is based (Holsti, 1975: 13-14). Kissinger's organization of the NSC system has certainly permitted him to define his role in a way that has enhanced this latitude for choice (Leacacos, 1971-1972; Destler, 1971; George, 1972).

Kissinger's position at the pinnacle of the American foreign affairs hierarchy, amidst the existence of competing policy recommendations, may be regarded as necessary conditions to test the impact of his operational code on American policy. They establish the conditions for "action indispensability" and "actor indispensability" that are necessary in order to assess an individual's personal impact on political outcomes (Greenstein, 1969: 40-57). Kissinger's strategic location in the decision-making environment, his personal skills as a diplomat and bureaucratic infighter, and the degree of restructurability inherent in nonroutine decision-making situations meet the circumstances in which his actions may be indispensable in the explanation of American foreign policy (Greenstein, 1969: 42-46).

The presence of competing policy recommendations for the same situation by different individuals indicates that Kissinger's actions may not be merely indispensable but also uniquely necessary in explaining American policy. Unique is used here in the sense that his actions are primarily influenced by idiosyncratic personality traits instead of by dispositions acquired with the role or by stimuli emanating from the

objective situation (Greenstein, 1969: 46-49). For the complex bargaining situation that constituted the case study in this analysis, stimuli from the features of the objective situation may be less influential than role or idiosyncratic dispositions. The existence of different policy recommendations in this case supports this proposition. To distinguish whether role or personality dispositions influenced Kissinger's policy choices, the foregoing analysis has proceeded on the assumption that a decision maker's operational code is an idiosyncratic variable or, more accurately, a complex of idiosyncratic variables. The data base for constructing Kissinger's code is independent from both the role requirements of his office and his policy making behavior.

The congruency between this code and his conduct of the Vietnam negotiations implies that a knowledge of Kissinger's operational code is a necessary condition for the explanation of his behavior. The strategy and tactics in the Secretary of State's operational code are reflected in the data when the entire sequence of events in Figure 1 is matched with the tenets of the code. The alternation of new diplomatic and military initiatives in Figure 1 is consistent with the prescriptions for strategic and tactical moves that appear in Kissinger's academic writings. His goals and behaviors during the Vietnam negotiations appear to be rational extensions of his general beliefs regarding effective political action.

It is important to emphasize, however, that the existence of this relationship does not explain all of American policy during the Vietnam conflict. In addition to the myriad American actions performed on the battlefield and at the conference table, which are not reported in the data sources, even the behaviors that are plotted in Figure 1 are not all subsumed under the prescriptions of Kissinger's operational code. The most important examples that reflect the impact of other variables are the American behaviors between October and December 1972, which were heavily influenced by bureaucratic constraints and the requirements of alliance diplomacy. Furthermore, it would be misleading to infer that the degree of congruence between Kissinger's code and his behavior is so well matched that it is possible to anticipate the exact character of his behavior. The preceding analysis does not pretend to specify all aspects of the particular response that Kissinger would endorse as an appropriate American action at a given point between 1969 and 1973. For example, in Figure 1 the code's instrumental principles do not account for variations in the response time between different escalations by the North Vietnamese and counterescalations by the United States. Nor does it prescribe the exact substance of an

American response to either an escalatory or a conciliatory stimulus by North Vietnam. The American behaviors are related to one another on a continuum, but it would not be possible to predict either the continuum's number of categories or their particular content if one had advance knowledge of Kissinger's operational code.

Expressed in the language of scaling analysis, it is possible to make an ordinal estimate as to whether Kissinger's response would be more conciliatory or more escalatory than his previous behavior, given his operational code and North Vietnamese behavior, but it is not possible to predict how much more conciliatory or escalatory, which would involve an interval-scaled estimate. Since there is also a wide variety of potential individual and combined behaviors that could meet the criterion of "more" conciliatory or "more" escalatory, the concrete substance of his response is also not predictable.

Consequently, the code's prescriptions indicate the constraints or parameters of Kissinger's behavior preferences rather than specify their exact values. The implications of these limitations are twofold. First, at the most, Kissinger's operational code is only a necessary condition and not a sufficient condition for predicting and explaining his exact behavior. Second, in the absence of a more rigorous measurement of Kissinger's operational code and his behavior, the relationships reported in this study should be regarded as working hypotheses and subjected to further testing by other scholars, who might include additional role, organizational, or personality variables in their research designs and analyze Kissinger's behavior in several bargaining situations, e.g., the SALT talks, the "shuttle diplomacy" in the Middle East, or domestic bargaining with the U.S. Congress.<sup>10</sup> An alternative path for future research is to do a comparative analysis of the operational codes and behaviors of several different decision makers.

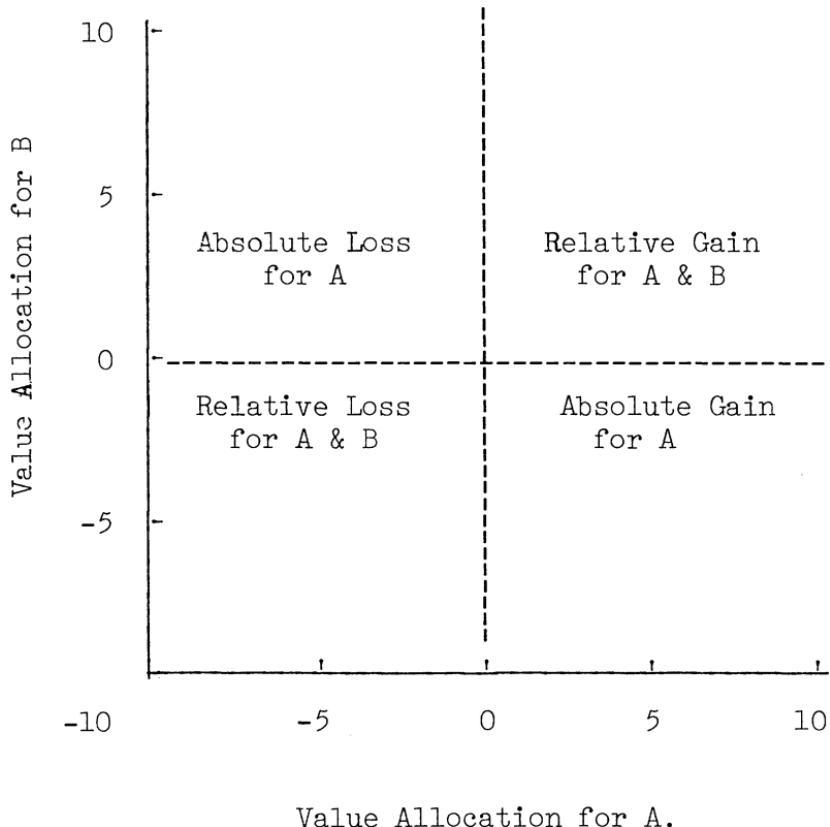
If the principles of Kissinger's operational code did impose a construct of "bounded rationality" on his responses to this decision-making situation, what can be concluded about the code's structure? The interrelationships among the philosophical and instrumental components appear to be interdependent and hierarchical. The prescriptions for the management of conflict and the selection of political goals are consistent with the philosophical beliefs about the nature of politics and the sources of conflict. These postulates are related to axioms concerning man's control of historical development and the roles of chance and

10. The general problem of the interaction between role and personality orientations is explored by Glad (1973: 310-311). Analyses of Kissinger's behavior that incorporate other variables and other cases include Perlmutter (1975), Newhouse (1973), Walker (1975), Crocker (1976), Ward (1975), and Eldridge (1976).

tragedy in human affairs. The chain of reasoning that connects these components can be summarized as follows: because the individual does not exercise sufficient control over historical change, the best mode of political leadership is the statesman's, which prescribes negotiation rather than charisma or force to achieve political goals and minimize the risk of tragic historical consequences. A corollary of this reasoning is that the use of force is justified only to prevent the tragic consequences associated with charismatic or violent modes of leadership.

Although Kissinger's operational code may be unique, in the sense that this set of dispositions is not part of the role characteristics associated with the offices of National Security Advisor or Secretary of State, it is still possible to incorporate his operational code into a more general typology of decision-making strategies. Taken collectively, the philosophical and instrumental components approximate game theory's "prisoner's dilemma" description of the nature of politics (Snyder, 1971). The participants in the political process are differentiated according to their preferred solutions to this game, in which the nature of politics is described as a situation in which competing claims for the allocation of values can be resolved in one of four ways from the perspective of an individual participant A: all participants gain something (relative gain outcome); all participants lose something (relative loss outcome); A gains and the others lose (absolute gain outcome); A loses and the others gain (absolute loss outcome). These solutions can be most easily understood when they are graphed (see Figure 2).

According to Kissinger's operational code, conquerors, prophets, and revolutionaries are leadership types who prefer an absolute gain solution and thereby risk an absolute loss outcome, since human mastery of historical development is rather modest. The statesman eschews an absolute gain solution and prefers a relative gain solution; however, he will pursue a relative loss *policy* to avoid an absolute loss *solution*. This distinction between policy and solution is at the core of the metagame theory developed by Howard (1968a, 1968b, 1971) to resolve the paradox associated with the application of the minimax strategy to a prisoner's dilemma situation. By relaxing the assumption of game theory that requires each participant to select his policy choice simultaneously and independently of the other participants, Howard develops a metagame, in which the possible reactions of participants to each other's choices are taken into consideration. Once this assumption is relaxed, an "infinite tree" of metagames is created, unless a "general preference relation" is assumed for each participant over the set of outcomes (Howard, 1968a; Schelling, 1968).



NOTE: Adapted from Sawyer and Guetzkow (1965: 476).

**Figure 2: Outcomes for the Prisoner's Dilemma Description of the Political Process.**

A decision maker's operational code may specify his "general preference relation." At least this function appears to be performed for Kissinger by his operational code. If his opponent chooses an absolute gain policy, then Kissinger counters with a relative loss maneuver to create a diplomatic or military stalemate. He continues this response pattern until he converts his opponent to a relative gain solution. The conversion process involves the use of diplomatic overtures to communicate a relative gain preference and the employment of threats and force to prevent any other solution. In this way the interaction between

Kissinger and his opponents in international bargaining situations can be conceptualized as a series of "prisoner's dilemma" games in which he pursues a consistent, predictable, metagame policy. This predictability is communicated to Kissinger's opponents by his diplomatic initiatives and the rationale that publicly accompanies his policy choices. Its credibility is communicated by the use of threats and force against attempts to defect from a relative gain solution and a willingness to conclude a settlement that represents a relative gain for each participant.

The conflict orientation of the operational code construct and the impact of other variables on the policy-making process confine the potential generalizability of these findings to other bargaining situations in which Kissinger dominates the conduct of negotiations. However, within these constraints one can still hypothesize that the American detente policy toward the Soviet Union and the U.S. "shuttle diplomacy" in the Middle East should be viewed as attempts by Kissinger to convert the Soviet Union and the Arab states to a general preference for relative gain solutions. This type of bargaining strategy has generated mixed results in laboratory experiments (Rapoport and Chammah, 1965, 1966; Garner and Deutsch, 1974; Braver and Barnett, 1974; Terhune, 1974; Jackson, 1973; Vincent and Schwerin, 1971). A final evaluation of Kissinger's diplomacy must await the verdict of history and the work of other scholars.

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## APPENDIX A: Vietnam Events

The following chronology is extrapolated from Kalb and Kalb (1974). The number next to each item is the one used to plot its position in Figure 1 of the body of this paper. The page number in the Kalb and Kalb book where the item appears is also included, in parentheses, in order to cite fully the source. The chronology’s text does not correspond exactly to the formats associated with the "events data" movement in the field of international relations (Azar et al., 1972; Hermann, 1971, 1972), but each item contains the actor, action, and target of one or more events. The author inductively derived the action categories for the vertical continuum in Figure 1 by systematically scanning the chronology. The author and two colleagues subsequently coded the items into these categories and arranged the categories along the continuum. The mean percentage of intercoder agreement for matching behaviors with action categories was .82 between each of the possible pairs of coders. The mean level of intercoder agreement for arranging the categories along the continuum was .96, measured by averaging the Spearman’s  $r$  between the author’s continuum and the continua of the other two coders. A detailed copy of the coding rules and scaling procedures is available from the author on request.

1. (p. 126) January 23, 1969, U.S. proposes 2-track approach and mutual withdrawal of U.S. and North Vietnamese (NVN) troops from South Vietnam (SVN).

2. (p. 127) January-March 1969, Nixon asks Soviets to weaken support of Hanoi a la linkage.
3. (p. 127) Nixon decides privately on unilateral troop withdrawal.
4. (p. 130) NVN launches fairly large-scale offensive in February 1969.
5. (p. 130) February 1969, Kissinger successfully pushes for no-bombing response to NVN offensive and argues linkage doctrine with Dobrynin.
6. (p. 131) March 1969, NVN argues for one-track approach, American withdrawal, ouster of Thieu regime, and establishment of coalition government including National Liberation Front (NLF).
7. (p. 131) U.S. secret bombing in Cambodia against NVN sanctuary, beginning March 18, 1969.
8. (p. 131) April 30, 1969, NLF states readiness for discussions with other side to make the conference move forward; Le Duc Tho arrives in Paris May 3, 1969.
9. (p. 133-134) May 14, 1969, Nixon makes major Vietnam speech, drafted by Kissinger; Kissinger tells Dobrynin that if Russians do not produce a settlement, the U.S. will escalate; Nixon's speech calls for mutual withdrawal; internationally supervised cease fires and elections; early POW release; abide by 1954 and 1962 Geneva agreements.
10. (p. 136) June 8, 1969, Nixon meets Thieu at Midway Island and announces withdrawal of 25,000 U.S. combat troops.
11. (p. 137) A number of NVN units withdraw from SVN and communist units break down into guerilla-size units in SVN (June 1969); Tho leaves Paris without explanation for Hanoi (July 10, 1969).
12. (p. 137-138) Kissinger persuades Nixon to open personal communications with Ho by sending secret letter proposing serious negotiations and, if possible, secret talks between Kissinger and NVN in Paris; letter sent July 15, 1969.
13. (p. 139) July 21, Hanoi approves secret meeting between Xuan Thuy and Kissinger; the two met August 4 and exchanged well-known positions.
14. (p. 140) August 1969, Ho replies to Nixon's letter, reiterates public one-track NVN position; Ho dies few days later.
15. (p. 140) September 1969, U.S. announces second troop withdrawal (35,000).
16. (p. 140) NVN dismiss second troop withdrawal as "tokenism" in Paris announcement mid-September 1969.
17. (p. 141) September-October 1969, NVN begin to establish heavy concentrations of troops along Cambodian border only 50 miles from Saigon; lull in fighting in SVN continues.

18. (p. 141-142) November 3, 1969, Nixon responds to October 15 nationwide antiwar protest moratorium with "major address," publicizing his secret contacts with Ho, etc., but not mentioning Kissinger's talk with Thuy; no new peace proposals, asks for support for Vietnamization.
19. (p. 147-148) Early December 1969, word from Moscow that Hanoi once again might be interested in serious dialogue; Cyrus Eaton leaves Hanoi after meeting with elite, impressed that Hanoi may be recovered from Ho's death so as to resume serious negotiations.
20. (p. 148) December 15, 1969, Nixon announces third troop withdrawal (50,000) more by 4/15/70; Kissinger notes straws in wind indicating perhaps NVN will talk in next two months.
21. (p. 148) December 1969, CIA reports five to ten times higher NVN infiltration rate down Ho trail compared to few months ago.
22. (p. 148) December 1969, U.S. reduces air sorties over communist position by 20%; MACV virtually terminates search-and-destroy missions by remaining U.S. troops.
23. (p. 148-149) January 31, 1970, Tho returns to Paris, announcing readiness for "serious negotiations," condemns Vietnamization.
24. (p. 149-150) Late February-early April 1970, Kissinger and Tho meet four times in secret; Tho demands Thieu regime ousted and American troop withdrawal; Kissinger keeps probing on POW treatment issue.
25. (p. 152-154) March 18, 1970, Sihanouk overthrown by Lon Nol, who asks for American aid against communists.
26. (p. 151) Nixon decides Kissinger-Tho talks fruitless; JCS and State agree that NVN had decided on military option; Kissinger agrees in retrospect.
27. (p. 154-156) April 1970, Lon Nol's regime losing battles to communist forces in Cambodia; NVN troops surrounding Phnom Penh.
28. (p. 155) April 20, 1970, (a) Nixon announces another troop withdrawal (150,000) by 5/1/71; (b) warns that increased enemy action that jeopardizes remaining U.S. troops will be met with strong and effective countermeasures.
29. (p. 161-162) April 28-30, Cambodian invasion begins; Nixon gives TV speech on April 30; U.S. troop in Cambodia until June 30.
30. (p. 171) April 30-June 1, 1970, NVN recalls several ambassadors and schedules meeting of NVN parliament.
31. (p. 172) Last U.S. troops leave Cambodia on June 30, 1970.
32. (p. 172-173) July 1, 1970, Nixon appoints David Bruce to head U.S. negotiating team in Paris, signaling U.S. readiness to resume nego-

tiations; approves cease-fire-in-place proposal as U.S. positions on Kissinger's recommendation.

33. (p. 174-175) Hanoi sends Thuy back to Paris after several months of absence (July-September 1970).
34. (pp. 174-175) September-October 1970, (a) American new cease-fire-in-place negotiating position presented by Kissinger to Thuy in secret meetings and then by Bruce at official negotiating session; (b) NVN reiterate previous position of removing Thieu and imposing coalition government.
35. (p. 176-177) February 8, 1971, ARVN invades Laos with heavy U.S. combat and logistical air support; withdraws from Laos 45 days later.
36. (p. 178-180) May 31, 1971, Kissinger meets in first of six negotiating sessions with Tho and proposes new plan for peace: (1) total American withdrawal within six months after agreement signed; (2) promised resignation of Thieu one month before nationwide SVN elections; (3) reiterates cease-fire-in-place.
37. (p. 180-181) Tho's 5/31/71 position is that U.S. must agree to acceptable political settlement before withdrawal.
38. (p. 181) June 16, 1971, Kissinger's second meeting with Tho, in which (a) Tho presents nine-point peace plan that (b) Kissinger accepts as the basis for negotiating a settlement of the war.
39. (p. 181) At Paris meeting NVN publicly proposes previous position: (a) Thieu's removal and a date for total U.S. withdrawal; (b) Tho privately assures Kissinger that nine-point plan is NVN real position, June 30, 1971.
40. (p. 182) At July 12 and 26 meetings with Tho, Kissinger narrows disagreement to two of nine points in NVN plan.
41. (p. 182-183) August 16, 1971, Kissinger and Nixon's proposals on two points presented to Tho: (1) specific U.S. withdrawal date, subject to signing of agreement; (2) pledge of neutrality in elections in SVN for President, scheduled for October 3, 1971; (3) reciprocal reduction of aid by outside powers and respect for nonalignment.
42. (p. 183) September 13, 1971, Tho refuses Kissinger's proposal in secret talks after careful study; interim had seen Thieu's opposing candidates withdraw from race; therefore, U.S. withdrawal date too far in future and elections a sham.
43. (p. 184) November 1971, Hanoi breaks off negotiations between Kissinger and Tho.
44. (p. 284) January 5, 1972, Nixon reveals secret Tho-Kissinger meetings in speech.

45. (p. 284) January 26, 1972, Nixon sends private message to Hanoi, proposing new try at secret negotiations.
46. (p. 284) NVN accepts Nixon offer few weeks later and proposes any date after 3/15/72; Kissinger proposes 3/20/72; Hanoi accepts.
47. (p. 285) March 6, 1972, NVN propose that meeting be postponed until 4/15/72; Kissinger proposes 4/24/72.
48. (p. 285) March 31, 1972, Hanoi agrees to 4/24/72, if Paris talks also begin again.
49. (p. 284-285) Before Kissinger could agree, he learns of NVN attack on 3/31/72 across DMZ on scale of massive invasion.
50. (p. 286-290, 293) April 4, 1972, WSAG (Kissinger and Nixon) decision to influence flow of Soviet supplies as necessary for halting NVN invasion; Kissinger and Nixon also decide to build up American air and naval strength in Indochina for B-52 bombing above DMZ, including Hanoi-Haiphong by April 15, 1972.
51. (p. 296) Nixon announces April 26, 1972 that (a) 20,000 more American troops to withdraw by 7/1/72, leaving 49,000 in SVN; (b) Paris talks will resume 4/27/72; (c) American air and naval attacks on NVN would continue until communists stop offensive.
52. (p. 299) May 2, 1972, (a) Kissinger and Tho meet secretly in Paris in wake of the fall of Quangtri City provincial capital; Kissinger offers: if cease fire and POW return, then withdrawal of U.S. from Indochina within four months; (b) Tho rejects and reiterates American withdrawal, Thieu ouster, and coalition SVN government, as NVN invasion continues.
53. (p. 300) May 8, 1972, Nixon decides to step up bombings, mine Hanoi and Haiphong, although Kissinger recommends more B-52 bombing; Nixon announces terms of 5/2/72 American proposal that Tho had rejected.
54. (p. 311, 336-339) May 1972, Hanoi pauses outside Hue to regroup; in June 1972 all major diplomats recalled to Hanoi for consultations following Moscow summit and Sino-Soviet pressure to negotiate with U.S.
55. (p. 339) July 19, 1972, Washington and Hanoi jointly announce Kissinger and Tho meeting in Paris.
56. (p. 339) In meetings between Kissinger and Tho on 8/1 and 8/14 Tho talked about reality of two administrations, two armies, and three political groupings in SVN, though still denouncing Thieu and his clique 80% of the time.

57. (p. 341) August 16-18, 1972, Kissinger visits Saigon, Tho returns to Hanoi via Moscow and Peking, amidst intelligence reports that Peking and Moscow are slowing down military supplies to Hanoi.
58. (p. 345-346) Tho publicly announces NVN position on two administrations, two armies, and other political forces in SVN 9/11/72 and advocates unimposed provisional government.
59. (p. 348) September 15, 1972, Kissinger and Tho meet secretly to talk about unimposed government interpretation of NVN's 9/11/72 statement; agree to meet again 9/26/72.
60. (p. 349) September 26-27, 1972, Tho proposes National Council of Reconciliation and Concord, three groups operating on unanimity, instead of provisional government. Agree to meet again 10/8/72.
61. (p. 351) October 5, 1972, Nixon announces U.S. won't be stampeded into agreement.
62. (p. 354) October 8-17, 1972, after initially reverting to Thieu ouster demand, Tho presents nine-point plan to Kissinger at secret meeting, accepting two-track approach (text of nine points is on p. 355). Tho and Kissinger agree on draft agreement subject to redrafting and clarification.
63. October 22, 1972, Thieu agrees to cease-fire only and U.S. proposes to stop all military actions above twentieth parallel on October 25.
64. (p. 377) October 23, 1972, Kissinger cables Tho, requesting another meeting in Paris.
65. (p. 379) October 26, 1972, NVN reveals in Hanoi broadcast the terms of the nine-point Vietnam agreement of October 8; (b) evening of 10/26/72 Hanoi cables invitation to resume early negotiations. (a) Kissinger makes "peace is at hand" speech.
66. (p. 388-389) First three weeks of November 1972, U.S. airlifts one year's worth of supplies to SVN and turns over U.S. bases to SVN.
67. (p. 393-396) Tho leaves Hanoi for Paris and arrives 11/17/72; Kissinger arrives 11/19/72; (a) Kissinger and Tho met 11/20-11/23/72 privately.  
(c) (p. 400-401) At third meeting Tho abandons 10/8/72 position and reverts to Thieu ouster demand, (b) after Kissinger places new Thieu and Nixon demands on table.
68. (p. 390, 395, 398, 402) Kissinger and Tho meetings 11/24 and 11/25/72, at end of which Kissinger proposes recess until December 4.

69. (p. 406-412) December 4-12, 1972, negotiations become deadlocked between Kissinger and Tho; Kissinger returns to Washington, December 13.
70. (p. 412) Nixon cables Hanoi 12/14/72 that serious negotiations must resume within 72 hours or else.
71. (p. 414) After Nixon ultimatum to NVN, B-52 bombing resumes December 17-29; Kissinger preferred counterforce bombing and ground attack on NVN rather than countervalue bombing; he also favored letting Hanoi know bombing coming in advance.
72. (p. 418) December 30, 1972, U.S. (a) announces halt in bombing of heartland and expresses hope that negotiations will resume; (b) as soon as serious negotiations resume, all bombing above twentieth parallel will stop; (c) Hanoi agrees to talks.
73. (p. 418) Kissinger and Tho meeting in Paris 1/8/73-1/9/73 and "make progress" privately; Kissinger returns to Washington; Thieu OKs agreement 1/17/73.
74. (p. 420) 1/23/73, Kissinger and Tho reach final agreement and sign.
75. (p. 422) 1/27/73, Rogers signs formal agreement in Paris for U.S.

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